

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1                   1.       An apparatus comprising:  
2                   a first channel spatial filter, wherein a first input signal and a second input  
3 signal are input to said first channel spatial filter, and wherein a first output signal is  
4 output by said first channel spatial filter;  
5                   a second channel spatial filter, wherein a third input signal and a fourth  
6 input signal are input to said second channel spatial filter, and wherein a second output  
7 signal is output by said second channel spatial filter; and  
8                   a binaural spatial filter, wherein said first and second output signals are  
9 input to said binaural spatial filter and wherein a first channel output signal is output by  
10 said binaural spatial filter and a second channel output signal is output by said binaural  
11 spatial filter.
- 1                   2.       The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first input signal is output  
2 by a first microphone corresponding to a first channel and said second input signal is  
3 output by a second microphone corresponding to said first channel, and wherein said third  
4 input signal is output by a third microphone corresponding to a second channel and said  
5 fourth input signal is output by a fourth microphone corresponding to said second  
6 channel.
- 1                   3.       The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said first microphone and said  
2 second microphone are positioned in a first end-fire array and wherein said third  
3 microphone and said fourth microphone are positioned in a second end-fire array.
- 1                   4.       The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said apparatus is a hearing aid,  
2 wherein said first microphone and said second microphone are proximate to a user's left  
3 ear, and wherein said third microphone and said fourth microphone are proximate to a  
4 user's right ear.
- 1                   5.       The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first channel spatial filter  
2 further comprises:  
3                   a first fixed polar pattern unit, said first fixed polar pattern unit outputting  
4 a first unit output;

5 a second fixed polar pattern unit, said second fixed polar pattern unit  
6 outputting a second unit output; and  
7 a first combining unit comprising a first adaptive filter, wherein said first  
8 combining unit receives said first unit output and said second unit output, and wherein  
9 said first combining unit outputs said first output signal.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said second channel spatial filter  
2 further comprises:  
3 a third fixed polar pattern unit, said third fixed polar pattern unit outputting  
4 a third unit output;  
5 a fourth fixed polar pattern unit, said fourth fixed polar pattern unit  
6 outputting a fourth unit output; and  
7 a second combining unit comprising a second adaptive filter, wherein said  
8 second combining unit receives said third unit output and said fourth unit output, and  
9 wherein said second combining unit outputs said second output signal.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 6, further comprising a processor, wherein  
2 said first, second, third, and fourth fixed polar pattern units and said first and second  
3 combining units are implemented by a software program running on said processor.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said processor is a digital  
2 processor.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 1, said binaural spatial filter further  
2 comprising:  
3 a first combining unit, wherein said first combining unit combines said  
4 first and second output signals and outputs a reference signal;  
5 a first adaptive filter, said first adaptive filter receiving said reference  
6 signal;  
7 a second combining unit, wherein said second combining unit combines  
8 said first output signal with a first adaptive filter output, and wherein said second  
9 combining unit outputs said first channel output signal;  
10 a second adaptive filter, said second adaptive filter receiving said reference  
11 signal; and

a third combining unit, wherein said third combining unit combines said second output signal with a second adaptive filter output, and wherein said third combining unit outputs said second channel output signal.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a processor, wherein said first, second, and third combining units and said first and second adaptive filters are implemented by a software program running on said processor.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, said binaural spatial filter further comprising:

a first channel low pass filter, said first channel low pass filter accepting said first output signal and outputting a first filtered output signal;

a first delay unit, said first delay unit accepting said first filtered output signal and outputting a delayed first filtered output signal;

a first channel high pass filter, said first channel high pass filter accepting said first output signal and outputting a second filtered output signal;

a second channel low pass filter, said second channel low pass filter accepting said second output signal and outputting a third filtered output signal;

a second delay unit, said second delay unit accepting said third filtered output signal and outputting a delayed third filtered output signal;

a second channel high pass filter, said second channel high pass filter accepting said second output signal and outputting a fourth filtered output signal;

an adaptive processor, said adaptive processor accepting said second and fourth filtered output signals and outputting an adaptively processed signal;

a first combining unit, said first combining unit accepting said delayed first filtered output signal and said adaptively processed signal, said first combining unit outputting said first channel output signal; and

a second combining unit, said second combining unit accepting said delayed third filtered output signal and said adaptively processed signal, said second combining unit outputting said second channel output signal.

12. A hearing aid, comprising:

a first microphone outputting a first microphone signal;

a second microphone outputting a second microphone signal, wherein said first and second microphones are positioned as a first end-fire array proximate to a user's left ear;

a third microphone outputting a third microphone signal;  
a fourth microphone outputting a fourth microphone signal, wherein said third and fourth microphones are positioned as a second end-fire array proximate to a user's right ear;

a left spatial filter, said left spatial filter comprising:

a first fixed polar pattern unit, said first fixed polar pattern unit outputting a first unit output;

a second fixed polar pattern unit, said second fixed polar pattern unit outputting a second unit output; and

a first combining unit comprising a first adaptive filter, wherein said first combining unit receives said first unit output and said second unit output, and wherein said first combining unit outputs a left spatial filter output signal.

a right spatial filter, said right spatial filter comprising:

a third fixed polar pattern unit, said third fixed polar pattern unit outputting a third unit output;

a fourth fixed polar pattern unit, said fourth fixed polar pattern unit outputting a fourth unit output; and

a second combining unit comprising a second adaptive filter, wherein said second combining unit receives said third unit output and said fourth unit output, and wherein said second combining unit outputs a right spatial filter output signal;

a binaural spatial filter, said binaural spatial filter comprising:

a third combining unit, wherein said third combining unit combines said left spatial filter output signal and said right spatial filter output signal and outputs a reference signal;

a third adaptive filter, said third adaptive filter receiving said reference signal;

a fourth combining unit, wherein said fourth combining unit combines said left spatial filter output signal with a third adaptive filter output, and wherein said fourth combining unit outputs a left channel output signal;

36 a fourth adaptive filter, said fourth adaptive filter receiving said  
37 reference signal; and  
38 a fifth combining unit, wherein said fifth combining unit combines  
39 said right spatial filter output signal with a fourth adaptive filter output, and  
40 wherein said fifth combining unit outputs a right channel output signal;  
41 a first output transducer, said first output transducer converting said left  
42 channel output signal to a left channel audio output; and  
43 a second output transducer, said second output transducer converting said  
44 right channel output signal to a right channel audio output.

1 13. A method of processing sound, comprising the steps of:  
2 receiving a first input signal from a first microphone;  
3 receiving a second input signal from a second microphone;  
4 providing said first and second input signals to a first fixed polar pattern  
5 unit;  
6 providing said first and second input signals to a second fixed polar pattern  
7 unit;  
8 adaptively combining a first fixed polar pattern unit output and a second  
9 fixed polar pattern unit output to form a first channel binaural filter input;  
10 receiving a third input signal from a third microphone;  
11 receiving a fourth input signal from a fourth microphone;  
12 providing said third and fourth input signals to a third fixed polar pattern  
13 unit;  
14 providing said third and fourth input signals to a fourth fixed polar pattern  
15 unit;  
16 adaptively combining a third fixed polar pattern unit output and a fourth  
17 fixed polar pattern unit output to form a second channel binaural filter input;  
18 combining said first channel binaural filter input and said second channel  
19 binaural filter input to form a reference signal;  
20 adaptively combining said reference signal with said first channel binaural  
21 filter input to form a first channel output signal; and  
22 adaptively combining said reference signal with said second channel  
23 binaural filter input to form a second channel output signal.

1            14.        The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:  
2            converting said first channel output signal to a first channel audio signal;  
3        and  
4            converting said second channel output signal to a second channel audio  
5        signal.

1                    15.        The method of claim 13, wherein said step of adaptively combining  
2        said first fixed polar pattern unit output and said second fixed polar pattern unit output to  
3        form said first channel binaural filter input further comprises the step of varying a first  
4        gain value to position a first null corresponding to said first channel binaural filter input,  
5        and wherein said step of adaptively combining said third fixed polar pattern unit output  
6        and said fourth fixed polar pattern unit output to form said second channel binaural filter  
7        input further comprises the step of varying a second gain value to position a second null  
8        corresponding to said second channel binaural filter input.

1                   16.     The method of claim 13, wherein said steps of adaptively  
2     combining utilize an LS algorithm.

1                    17.     The method of claim 13, wherein said steps of adaptively  
2     combining utilize an RLS algorithm.

1                   18.     The method of claim 13, wherein said steps of adaptively  
2     combining utilize an TLS algorithm.

1                    19.     The method of claim 13, wherein said steps of adaptively  
2     combining utilize an NLMS algorithm.

1                   20.     The method of claim 13, wherein said steps of adaptively  
2     combining utilize an LMS algorithm.